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ABSTRACT

This 30-item annotated bibliography of documents concerning reading assessment in elementary education from the ERIC database, dating from 1983 to 1988, includes documents which give an overview of recent developments in reading assessment, presents standardized tests and alternative measures (including Informal Reading Inventories), and deals with assessment techniques for the learning disabled. (RS)

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Reading Assessment in Elementary Education

by Roger Sensenbaugh

The state of reading assessment at the elementary level is in flux. Some writers argue, very forcefully, that the construction of standardized tests has not kept up with advances in reading research and that current standardized tests do more harm than good. Others argue that alternatives to standardized tests have their own problems. The consensus seems to be that standardized tests and alternative, classroom-based assessment each have their place and that both kinds of testing must be chosen, used, and evaluated with caution.

This *FAST Bib* begins with several documents that give an overview of recent devlopments in reading assessment and then presents standardized tests and numerous proposed alternative measures. Informal reading inventories have been given a section of their own. The last section deals with reading assessment techniques for the learning disabled.

The abstracts for most of these entries have been edited to allow for the inclusion of more citations. The ED numbers have been included so that the user who wants more information about reading assessment can go directly to microfiche collections, order from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), or go to *Resources in Education* for information on obtaining those sources not available through EDRS. The citations to journals are from the *Current Index to Journals in Education*; these articles can be acquired most economically from library collections or interlibrary loan. Alternatively, reprint services are available from University Microfilms International (UMI) and Original Article Tearsheet Service (OATS) of the Institute for Scientific Information.

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Overview

Farr, Roger. "New Trends in Reading Assessment: Better Tests, Better Uses," *Curriculum Review*, v27 n1 p21-23 Sep-Oct 1987.

Focuses on the need to develop better tests of students' reading abilities and better interpretation of test scores. Describes criterion-referenced tests versus norm-referenced tests, highlighting the Degrees of Reading Power and Metropolitan Achievement Tests: Reading, and discusses the need for assessing the reading process.

Fredericks, Anthony D. "Latest Model," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n8 p790-91 Apr 1987.

Offers a humorous look at the problem of assessment.

Froese, Victor. "Language Assessment: What We Do and What We Should Do!" *Canadian Journal of English Language Arts*, v11 n1 p33-40 1988.

Sketches some of the dilemmas in language assessment and presents exemplary practical approaches to assessment in the language arts areas of listening, oral language, reading, and writing.

Manning, Gary; and others. "First Grade Reading Assessment: Teacher Opinions, Standardized

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Reading Tests, and Informal Reading Inventories." Paper presented at the 14th Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, 1985. 13p. [ED 265 204]

Investigates the relationship between and among the results of three types of reading assessments in the first grade: a standardized reading test (the Stanford Achievement Test); an informal reading inventory (the Classroom Reading Inventory); and teacher judgment of student rank in reading achievement. Teacher opinion correlated with all subtests of the standardized test and the word recognition portion of the reading inventory. The achievement of all combined classrooms and most individual classrooms in the study was average or above, based on national norms.

Valencia, Sheila; Pearson, P. David. "Reading Assessment: Time for a Change," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n8 p726-32 Apr 1987.

Argues that the tests used to measure reading achievement do not reflect recent advances in the understanding of the reading process, and that effective instruction can best be fostered by resolving the discrepancy between what is known and what is measured.

Standardized Tests

Blanchard, Jay S. "Test Review: Computer-Based Reading Assessment Instrument (CRAI)," *Reading Teacher*, v41 n1 p92-94 Oct 1987.

Evaluates the Computer-Based Assessment Instrument (CRAI) as a test of reading proficiency. Notes strengths of CRAI, including its use as a quick assessment of silent reading comprehension level, and the problems with readability and content-specific word lists and the lack of scoring features.

Grunkmeyer, Virgil. "Primary Reading Assessment—Quick and Easy," *Reading Horizons*, v27 n2 p86-88 Win 1986.

Explains the use of the Dolch List in the lower elementary grades.

Rasool, Joan M.; Royer, James M. "Assessment of Reading Comprehension Using the Sentence Verification Technique: Evidence from Narrative and Descriptive Texts," *Journal of Educational Research*, v79 n3 p180-84 Jan-Feb 1986.

The sentence verification technique (SVT) was used to test 44 third graders to assess the validity of the technique. Results were viewed as being consistent with the interpretation that the SVT is a valid means of measuring reading comprehension.

Reynolds, Cecil R.; and others. "Regression Analyses of Bias on the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children," *Journal of School Psychology*, v23 n2 p195-204 Sum 1985.

Investigates the criterion-related validity of the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC), predicting reading comprehension, arithmetic, and general achievement, for large samples of blacks and whites tested during the standardization of the battery. Finds that the Sequential and Mental Processing Composite scales tended to overpredict black children's academic levels, especially on the achievement scales.

Roberts, Douglas B.; and others. "Michigan Educational Assessment Program Handbook, 1986-87." Michigan State Board of Education, Lansing, MI, 1986. 109 p. [ED 278 710]

This handbook was developed to assist educators in analyzing, using, and reporting Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test results. It includes an overview of the program and a description of the tests; numbers of objectives and test items for each skill area; suggested methods; techniques and strategies for using the results at the student, school, and district levels; and a discussion of appropriate uses of the test results.

Sawyer, Diane J.; and others. "Test Review: Group Assessment in Reading: Classroom Teacher's Handbook," *Reading Teacher*, v39 n6 p544-47 Feb 1986.

Examines the GAR, which is intended as a group assessment of reading ability for elementary and secondary school students in the areas of reading level, comprehension, study skills, and reading interests. Concludes that the test has many shortcomings.

Alternative Measures

Bartoli, Jill Sunday. "The Paradox in Reading: Has the Solution Become the Problem? " *Journal of Reading*, v28 n7 p580-84 Apr 1985.

Suggests that continually refined and segmented reading assessment measures may contribute to reading problems. Discusses three solutions to reading difficulties that have become problems themselves and suggests that more ho-

listic, socially interactive teaching methods are a better solution to reading disabilities.

Calfee, Robert C. "The School as a Context for Assessment of Literacy," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n8 p738-43 Apr 1987.

Notes that classroom assessment of literacy is dominated by methods more appropriate to external mandates. Suggests an alternative method grounded in the teacher's professional judgment and in the relations between curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Dixon, John. "Becoming a Maturer Reader," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n8 p761-65 Apr 1987.

Points out that children's growth in response to literature is not assessed by existing standardized tests or by progress from one textbook to another. Suggests guidelines for teacher observation of children's responses and provides a checklist for assessing oral and written reactions.

Johnston, Peter. "Teachers as Evaluation Experts," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n8 p744-48 Apr 1987.

Argues that process-oriented evaluation of children's literacy by the classroom teacher is more efficient and more instructionally valid than current test-driven evaluation procedures.

Leadbetter, Peter; Winteringham, David. "Data-Pac: What's In It for Teachers?" *British Journal of Special Education*, v13 n4 p162-64 Dec 1986.

The article describes Data-Pac (Daily Teaching and Assessment for Primary Aged Children), materials which assess student performance in reading, mathematics, handwriting, and spelling and present a selection of sequenced teaching objectives for an individualized program. Materials reflect the concepts of criterion-referenced assessment, direct instruction, behavioral objectives, and precision teaching.

Moore, David W. "A Case for Naturalistic Assessment of Reading Comprehension," *Language Arts*, v60 n8 p957-69 Nov-Dec 1983.

Presents an historical overview of the introduction of the major reading comprehension assessments, showing that the predominant approaches were shaped by the prevailing educational measurement milieu and were implemented largely in response to public pressure. Argues in favor of a naturalistic reading comprehension assessment for evaluating those behaviors that elude quantification.

Wood, Karen D. "Read First, Test Later: Meeting the Needs of the 'Overskilled' Reader," *Reading Horizons*, v24 n2 p133-40 Win 1984.

Discusses the problems of overusing workbooks, dittos, and basal assessment tests in beginning reading instruction. Proposes alternatives.

Woodley, John W. "Reading Assessment from a Whole Language Perspective." 1988. 16 p. [ED 296 309]

Approaches to reading assessment within the whole language framework include a print awareness task, book handling task, patterned language task, reading interview, miscue analysis, and situational responses to reading. Argues that the observations made by teachers using these assessments provide a meaningful alternative to heavy reliance on standardized tests and lead to a more effective educational program for all.

Woodley, John W.; Smith, R. Lee. "Reading Assessment for the Young Reader." 1988. 23 p. [ED 295 126]

Methods used to diagnose a seven-year-old boy's reading problems illustrate the fact that reading assessments based upon a reader's strengths and his/her understanding and control of the process will provide information which is more useful to teachers and parents than that provided by the numerical results of standardized tests.

Informal Reading Inventories

Cardarelli, Aldo F. "The Influence of Reinspection on Students' IRI Results," *Reading Teacher*, v41 n7 p664-67 Mar 1988.

Claims that in the conventional administration of the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) comprehension diagnosis is inordinately influenced by the reader's ability to recall information. Suggests that allowing reinspection by the reader restores recall to its proper function and may result in other advantages.

Fuchs, Lynn S.; and others. "The Validity of Informal Reading Comprehension Measures," *Remedial and Special Education (RASE)*, v9 n2 p20-28 Mar-Apr 1988.

Assesses the criterion, construct, and concurrent validity of four informal reading comprehension measures (question answering tests, recall measures, oral passage reading tests, and cloze techniques) with 70 mildly and moderately re-

tarded middle and junior high school boys. Results indicated that correct oral reading rate score demonstrated the strongest criterion validity.

Henk, William A. "Reading Assessments of the Future: Toward Precision Diagnosis," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n9 p860-70 May 1987.

Concludes that modified standard reading inventories may be made more useful for assessing the specific abilities and needs of disabled readers. Offers suggestions for making modifications.

Johnson, Marjorie Seddon; and others. "Informal Reading Inventories." Second Edition. Reading Aids Series, IRA Service Bulletin. International Reading Association, Newark, DE 1987. 164 p. [ED 277 993; for the first edition, see ED 072 437.]

Represents a comprehensive description of the use of informal reading inventories (IRIs). Provides teachers and reading specialists with practical strategies for forming diagnostic impressions that are useful for planning reading instruction.

Searls, Evelyn F. "What's the Value of an IRI? Is It Being Used?" *Reading Horizons*, v28 n2 p92-101 Win 1988.

Reports on a survey which indicates that classroom teachers rarely use the Informal Reading Inventory—a diagnostic and placement instrument for reading comprehension long recommended by teacher trainers. Suggests that teacher trainers focus on other more efficient means of obtaining reading diagnosis.

Learning Disabled

Dudley-Marling, Curt. "Assessing the Reading and Writing Development of Learning-Disabled Students: An Holistic Approach," *B. C. Journal of Special Education*, v12 n1 p41-51 1988.

In contrast to traditional practices in reading and writing assessment which focus on fragmented, isolated skills, a holistic approach to assessment is recommended. Children's reading and writing are seen as communicative behaviors which are effectively evaluated through systematic observation as they occur in natural settings.

Ewoldt, Carolyn. "Reading Tests and the Deaf Reader," *Perspectives for Teachers of the Hearing-Impaired*, v5 n4 p21-24 Mar-Apr 1987.

Argues that standardized reading tests are likely to provide an inaccurate assessment of reading comprehension for deaf students because of the lack of test coaching and test taking skills; item irrelevancy; and the difficulty of test directions. Testing alternatives include parent and teacher observation of students and qualitative evaluations of reading skills and strategies.

Gupta, R. M. "Learning Efficiency versus Low IQ and/or Teachers' Ratings as Predictors of Reading Ability of 'Mentally Defective' Children: A Longitudinal Study," *Educational Studies*, v11 n2 p109-18 1985.

Asserts that low IQ should not be deemed an index of poor learning ability. Information about middle school children's learning efficiency as measured by the Learning Efficiency Test Battery was found to be more useful for predicting reading ability than conventional types of assessment.

Silberman, Roseanne K.; Sowell, Virginia. "The Visually Impaired Student with Learning Disabilities: Strategies for Success in Language Arts," *Education of the Visually Handicapped*, v18 n4 p139-50 Win 1987.

Recommends assessment techniques and teaching strategies in the area of reading and language arts for the visually impaired student with learning disabilities. Outlines reading approaches, practical strategies for teaching reading comprehension and spelling, and suggestions for organizing the classroom environment.

Teeter, Phyllis Anne; Smith, Philip L. "Neuropsychological Assessment and Training of Cognitive Processing Strategies for Reading Recognition and Comprehension: A Computer Assisted Program for Learning Disabled Students." Final Report. Wisconsin Univ., Milwaukee, WI, 1986. 12p. [ED 278 209]

Describes the development and validation of microcomputer software during a two-year project to help assess reading disabled elementary grade children and to provide basic reading instruction.

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